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ABSTRACT

Site-based decisionmaking is the concept of collaboration between school faculty and administration in planning, problem solving, and decision making in school policies and practices. One reason to implement this type of management is that school reform requires the involvement of all stakeholders in the educational process to be effective. During 1988-90, the West Virginia Legislature passed bills that mandated site-based decisionmaking. A group of three teachers and an intermediate service agency educator was organized to conduct a study to identify model site-based decisionmaking programs. Out of 55 programs, 8 were selected. The development, goals, organizational structures, training resources, accomplishments/obstacles, future, demographics, and contact information for each program are given. Recommendations to educators as they begin restructuring include involving all persons affected by decisions in the decision-making process and valuing the opinions of others. Additional study organization materials are given in five appendices. An assessment form is provided for the reader to evaluate the study. (189 references) (EJS)

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WVEA-AEL
SITE-BASED DECISIONMAKING CASEBOOK

A Joint Study by the

West Virginia Education Association
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Charleston, West Virginia 25311

and

Appalachia Educational Laboratory
P. O. Box 1348
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The Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), Inc., works with educators in ongoing R & D-based efforts to improve education and educational opportunity. AEL serves as the Regional Educational Laboratory for Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. It also operates the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. AEL works to improve:

- professional quality,
- curriculum and instruction,
- community support, and
- opportunity for access to quality education by all children.

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Lynn Bennett, Regional Education Service Agency VII
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Also essential to this project were the teachers and administrators of the identified site-based decisionmaking schools who responded to the Program Description Form and to telephone interviews about the structure, function, and decisions of their projects. Their information on individual projects, analysis of accomplishments and obstacles, and recommendations to future implementers of site-based decisionmaking are valued contributions. Contact information is provided for these educators in each case study.

The assistance provided by WVEA from early discussions with Kayetta Meadows, president, to identify a topic important to West Virginia educators and to nominate study group members, through the printing and dissemination of the Program Description Form to more than 200 educators, and finally the announcement and printing of the *WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Casebook* has been critical to the project's completion.

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Executive Summary

An emerging topic of interest for educators in all states is site-based decisionmaking. Site-based decisionmaking is also known by other descriptors such as participatory decisionmaking, collegial management, and the team approach to school management. It refers to the concept of increased collaboration between teachers and school-based administrators in planning, problem solving, and decisionmaking on school policies and practices. Implementation of this collaborative process involves reorganizing the school's decisionmaking structure to allow input from all affected constituencies (Marburger, 1985).

Two reasons are cited in the literature for shifting decisionmaking authority to the school site: first, members of the school staff have the expertise and initiative to improve the instructional program and school (Guthrie & Reed, 1986); and second, long-lasting school reform requires the involvement of all stakeholders in the educational process (Guthrie, 1986).

An inherent part of site-based decisionmaking is power sharing. Although administrators may view this as risky, literature suggests that the advantages of shared decisionmaking make the risks worthwhile. For instance, participatory decisionmaking can promote better decisions and more effective implementation of these decisions. Also, sharing information and opinions helps establish communication channels that promote recognition of teachers' experiential wisdom (Smith, 1981).

Recognizing the importance and advantages of this concept for successful school restructuring, the West Virginia Legislature between 1988 and 1990 enacted legislation (Senate Bill 14, Senate Bill 18, House Bill 2326, and Senate Bill 1) that both mandates and supports site-based decisionmaking processes, such as K-4 teams and faculty senates.

Recent calls for the reform and restructuring of education have frequently cited the increased involvement of teachers in school decisionmaking as important to the success of most school improvement (Carnegie Task Force, 1986; Sizer, 1984; National Education Association, 1984). However, teachers at many current site-based management schools are involved in decisions on issues peripheral to fundamental instructional content or methodology (Malen et al., 1989) and seldom experience major changes in roles and responsibilities (Clung & White, 1988). According to results from a 1988 survey conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, teachers are not sufficiently involved in making critical decisions.

However, teachers in West Virginia voiced a different opinion in a survey conducted by a 1989 study group of teachers cosponsored by the West Virginia Education Association (WVEA) and Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL). Survey data indicated significantly greater involvement in decisionmaking than commonly reported in the literature. The WVEA-AEL study group findings were also much higher than those of teachers in the West Virginia or the national samples of the Carnegie Foundation study reported in *Teacher Involvement in Decisionmaking: A State-by-State Profile* (1988). Teachers in West Virginia have begun to be recognized as key resources for change, and teacher empowerment has become a focus of interest.

To further increase the involvement of teachers in site-based decisionmaking, a 1990 study group of teachers cosponsored by the WVEA and AEL focused their work on identifying West Virginia schools using site-based decisionmaking. The result of their search

is the *WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Casebook*.

The primary objective of the *WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Casebook* is to assist school personnel in AEL's Region who are planning site-based decisionmaking groups or programs. Study group members have provided an overview of site-based decisionmaking, a review of recent West Virginia legislation with its implications for site-based decisionmaking, and examples of eight site-based decisionmaking models in the state that illustrate increased collaboration between teachers and school-based administrators in planning, problem solving, and decisionmaking on school policies and practices.

In addition, study group members and AEL staff reflected on the data analyzed for the eight case studies and proposed the following recommendations to inform educators as they begin restructuring: (1) involve all persons affected by a decision in the decisionmaking process; (2) involve all site-based decisionmaking committee members in the development of goals and objectives; (3) establish the site-based decisionmaking committee as a high priority among the school's programs and activities; (4) value the opinions of others; (5) believe that site-based decisionmaking can work; (6) provide training on released time for all involved; (7) share leadership and responsibility among members; and (8) plan ahead and use time wisely.

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Introduction

The Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) seeks to provide professional development opportunities to educators by working with their associations. Since 1985, one way that the Classroom Instruction program has assisted associations is through the creation of study groups. AEL's purpose for establishing a study group is to assist educators in conducting and using research.

A study group is comprised of educators who are organized to conduct a study on an educational issue and who produce a product that is useful to their colleagues. Associations and AEL jointly select topics for study groups, although the selection of members is handled by the association. AEL staff participate in meetings as members of the study group and usually take a facilitative role. AEL provides a small grant to assist the study group, but the association or individual members often make in-kind contributions that far exceed AEL's grant. AEL provides additional services, such as editing, layout, and typesetting of the final product.

The responsibility for dissemination lies with both AEL and the association. AEL distributes the *WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Casebook* to educators in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. WVEA publicizes and distributes the publication to West Virginia educators upon request.

Planning the Study

WVEA and AEL have cosponsored study groups of teachers since 1985. As in the past, this study group of three teachers and an intermediate service agency educator began with a meeting between the WVEA president and the Classroom Instruction program director who identified the emergence in West Virginia of site-based decisionmaking as a welcome development in need of nurturing. One way to accomplish this, both organizations agreed, would be to identify model programs in the state where educators at the school level were planning, problem solving, deciding, and implementing schoolwide decisions collaboratively, without deference to role. Both the WVEA president and the CI program director expected that the final product of this group would be of interest to others in the state and in AEL's Region planning site-based decisionmaking groups or programs. The WVEA president identified and contacted study group members who had an interest in the topic and a willingness to use research in their development of a product for colleagues.

At their initial meeting, study group members decided to build upon the work of a previous WVEA-AEL study group whose members surveyed educators in West Virginia's schools identified by the state Department of Education as exemplary. This earlier group found, and reported in their final product *Factoring in Empowerment: Participatory Decisionmaking in West Virginia Exemplary Schools*, that these teachers and principals reported significantly more teacher involvement in school decisionmaking than was reported by teachers in the West Virginia or national samples surveyed for the 1988 Carnegie Study (AEL, 1989). Particularizing that decisionmaking to several working models in West Virginia schools was the goal of the 1990 WVEA-AEL study group.

Conducting the Study

The 1990 WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Study Group developed the "WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Program/Project Description

Form" and cover letter which were printed and mailed with return envelopes by the WVEA to association local affiliate presidents (see Appendices A-1 and A-3). The local presidents were asked to identify and distribute the forms to the principal and an experienced teacher in the school within their district that best exemplified site-based decisionmaking, and a memo to these educators requesting their participation was provided (see Appendix A-2). If local presidents were unable to identify such a school within their districts, a response form was provided to inform the study group of this (see Appendix B). Site-based decisionmaking, for purposes of the survey and study, referred to "teachers and administrators sharing in planning, problem solving, and decisionmaking on school policies and practices." Program/Project Description Forms and appropriate cover letters were also mailed with return envelopes to respondents to the 1989 WVEA site-based decisionmaking survey of educators in West Virginia Exemplary Schools to elicit descriptions of models of such processes in operation in these schools (see Appendix C). An initial response of six Program Description Forms from five schools was received.

Study group members then contacted Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) throughout the state to nominate other schools where faculties were engaged in site-based decisionmaking. Two additional schools were identified and forms were mailed to the principal and WVEA building representative of each (see Appendix D). Members also learned of the initiation of a Professional Development School (PDS) project funded by the Pittsburgh-based Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation and coordinated by West Virginia University. Study group members reviewed a description of the decisionmaking process required for acceptance as a PDS project site. Following review of this description, these six northern West Virginia schools were invited to participate and provided Program/Project Description Forms. A total of 202 description forms were supplied for the principal and one experienced teacher in each of the total of 101 schools identified or recommended by WVEA local affiliate presidents as West Virginia site-based decisionmaking implementers.

Following early analysis of Program/Project Description Forms, study group members agreed that further information was essential to determine if the models were effectively using site-based decisionmaking. Members designed a "Telephone Interview Protocol" (see Appendix E), received instruction in this research method, and conducted and audio recorded interviews with the principals and teachers who returned description forms. Since many educators in identified schools did not return the Program/Project Description Forms and several association presidents did not or could not (11 of 55) identify model site-based decisionmaking schools in their districts, a total of only eight schools could be used as case studies. For all of these, study group members obtained completed Program Description Forms and telephone interviews.

Following group analysis of interview tapes and notes and Description Form data, individual study group members developed case studies for the site-based decisionmaking models. These are presented in the Case Studies section. The case studies describe the goals, program history, organization, sources of assistance used, and future of the program for several working models of site-based decisionmaking in the state. Contact information for each model also enables the reader to directly question the implementers about program details.

The West Virginia Legislature addressed aspects of site-based decisionmaking in the 1988, 1989, and 1990 general sessions and in the 1990 special session. Study group members determined that an interpretation of sections of recently enacted laws, which permit or facilitate site-based decisionmaking components, would help readers review local policy and practice and plan changes. The West Virginia Legislation Facilitating Site-Based Decisionmaking section interprets these site-based decisionmaking components: the K-4 school team or school curriculum team, school advisory council, district professional staff development council, school improvement council, and faculty senate.

Classroom Instruction program staff developed the Introduction, Rationale, and Bibliography sections, and analyzed and summarized commonalities to compile the Recommendations section of this publication. AEL staff also developed the Executive

Summary; produced one-page flyers for AEL's and WVEA's use in announcing the publication; edited all copy; and typeset and printed camera-ready masters for AEL's Resource Center and WVEA to print, announce, and disseminate.

The authors, WVEA, and AEL intend that the *WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Casebook* be useful to practitioners who are organizing site-based decisionmaking groups or processes in their schools. They acknowledge the difficulty of locating all such models in the state and welcome the description of others for use in future documents on the topic.

Help Us Make This Publication Better

Readers are asked to complete the Study Group Product Assessment Form included with this product and to fold, staple, and return it to AEL. Suggestions for revisions to the document and/or similar publications are welcome.

Site-Based Decisionmaking: A Rationale

In view of the advantages to site-based decisionmaking cited in the literature, and the implementation of recent West Virginia legislation (SB 14, SB 18, HB 2326, and SB 1), the WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Study Group felt it imperative that West Virginia educators have enhanced understanding of the site-based decisionmaking process, be informed of opportunities for site-based decisionmaking in the recent legislation, and be provided with working models of site-based decisionmaking to which they could look for assistance. The following definition and discussion of site-based decisionmaking should provide a frame of reference prior to reading West Virginia examples of the process.

Definition of Site-Based Decisionmaking

Site-based decisionmaking, participatory decisionmaking, collegial management, the team approach to school management, and other descriptors have been applied to the concept of increased collaboration between teachers and school-based administrators in planning, problem solving, and decisionmaking on school policies and practices. Implementation of this collaborative process involves reorganizing the school's decisionmaking structure to allow input from all affected constituencies (Marburger, 1985). The projects described in this publication have at least one common component—increased teacher involvement in site-based decisionmaking.

The rationale for shifting decisionmaking authority to the school site is based on two assumptions. First, members of the school staff have the expertise and initiative to improve the instructional program and the school climate (Guthrie & Reed, 1986). The argument is that the inclusion of teachers in school leadership, decisionmaking, and problem solving directly engages their expertise and provides them an incentive to use their initiative. The second assumption is that long-lasting school reform requires the involvement of **all** stakeholders in the educational process (Guthrie, 1986).

Although recent calls for the reform and restructuring of education have frequently cited the increased involvement of teachers in school decisionmaking as important to the success of most school improvement (Carnegie Task Force, 1986; Sizer, 1984; NEA, 1984), teachers at many current site-based management schools are involved in decisions on issues peripheral to fundamental instructional content or methodology (Malen et al., 1989) and seldom experience major changes in roles and responsibilities (Clune & White, 1988). The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1988) conducted a survey of 20,000 teachers across the United States to determine, after five years of school reform activity, teacher perceptions of their involvement in key decisions that shape classroom and school policy and practice. In the study Ernest L. Boyer concluded that:

> Teachers, we found, are not sufficiently involved in making critical decisions. They have little influence over education procedures. While most teachers help choose textbooks and shape curriculum, the majority do not help select teachers and administrators at their schools, nor are they asked to participate in such crucial matters as teacher evaluation, staff development, budget, student placement, promotion and retention policies, and standards of student conduct (p. 1).

When the implementation of site-based decision-

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making limits teacher authority to decisions in areas over which they already have influence or in areas peripheral to teaching and learning, the results are a minimal increase in use of expertise and decline in morale and motivation.

In contrast, *Factoring in Empowerment: Participatory Decisionmaking in West Virginia Exemplary Schools*, a 1989 WVEA-AEL study group product, reported survey data which indicated significantly greater teacher involvement in decisionmaking than commonly reported in the literature or by teachers in the West Virginia or the national samples of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching survey (1988). Today many educational decisionmakers, including those in state legislatures, in state departments of education, and at school sites, realize that problems that exist in classrooms and schools are probably best understood by teachers. As a result, teachers have begun to be recognized as key resources for change, and teacher empowerment has become a focus of interest.

Advantages of Site-Based Decisionmaking

Voluntarily shared power is an inherent part of site-based decisionmaking. Although administrators may view this power sharing as risky, since it may involve a decrease in personal power, the literature suggests that the advantages of shared decisionmaking make the risks worthwhile.

Participatory decisionmaking can promote better decisions and their more effective implementation. Broader participation expands the range of concerns and perspectives that are considered in reaching more comprehensive conclusions. Also, sharing information and opinions helps establish communication channels that promote recognition of teachers' experiential wisdom (Smith, 1981). Since consensus reaching allows teachers to achieve a sense of ownership and commitment to the decision, implementation is made easier (Fulbright, 1988).

Several writers (Maeroff, 1988; Lieberman, 1988; Schneider, 1984) also suggest that participatory decisionmaking can improve both employee satisfaction and school climate. For example, when teachers are consulted about decisions, they feel the school values their opinion; in turn, they develop greater feelings of pride and job satisfaction (Smith, 1981). An effective participatory decisionmaking process increases trust and respect among staff members and creates an open atmosphere of sharing and experimentation, thereby reducing conflicts and frustration. Finally, the process of participatory decisionmaking is more consistent with the social, political, and educational goals of our nation.

Working Models of Site-Based Decisionmaking

There are no "magic formulas" for implementing site-based decisionmaking. Each school is unique and must design a decisionmaking structure that will fit its own characteristics and needs. However, learning theory tells us that modeling is one of the first and most essential steps in the learning process. Good teachers first model the strategy or learning behavior they wish their students to replicate; then they provide assistance or guided practice as the students attempt to master the skill. Novice writers frequently rely on models of effective writing to help them develop the skills needed for success. Consequently, the writers of this publication chose to include models of effective site-based decisionmaking in the form of case studies to empower teachers and administrators through an understanding of the processes and structure of participatory decisionmaking.

West Virginia Legislation Facilitating Site-Based Decisionmaking

The West Virginia Legislature in regular and special sessions between 1988 and 1990 provided opportunities for the establishment of and supported the implementation of site-based decisionmaking in the public schools. This section discusses the major provisions of recent education legislation which relate to this topic. For a more thorough understanding of the legislation, readers are encouraged to acquire copies of the bills cited.

With the passage of Senate Bill 14 (SB 14), referred to as the Omnibus Education Bill, in the summer of 1988, teachers, principals, parents, and community members were encouraged to play a greater role in the decisionmaking for elementary (kindergarten through fourth grade) education in their local schools. One of the major innovations established by this legislation was the creation of a school team organized to address curriculum improvements in each elementary school. The following excerpt from the bill describes the organization and purpose of these teams of educators.

> **18-2-6b. Establishment of school teams.**
>
> There shall be established at each elementary school in the state a team composed of the school principal, the counselor designated to serve that school and three teachers from the kindergarten through fourth grade faculty chosen by that faculty.
>
> The school team shall establish the programs and methods for implementing a curriculum based on state-approved learning outcomes for kindergarten through fourth grade based on the needs of the individual school with a focus on the basic skills of reading, composition, and mathematics.

Other language in SB 14 provided for or required the following of the educators who served on the school teams:

- submit revised curriculum for county board of education approval, and
- opportunity to apply for state-funded grants to better serve remedial and accelerated students.

The school teams were granted great flexibility in determining curriculum based upon individual school needs as developed by local educators.

Establishment of School Advisory Councils

In a second section of the 1988 legislation, the legislature permitted principals or the school community consisting of teachers, service personnel, the community (through petition to the school principal of at least 20 percent of the community), and principal to establish school advisory councils. Members of the council were designated as: the principal, three teachers, one school service personnel representative, three parents of children in the school (all elected by secret ballot), and two community representatives, appointed by the principal. Some of the bill's provisions to foster site-based decisionmaking within the school advisory councils:

- encouraged development of "alternatives to the operation of the school which meet or exceed the high quality standards established by the state board and will increase administrative efficiency, enhance involvement in the local school system or improve the educational performance of the school generally";

- required that council-developed proposals of policies and waivers to policies submitted to the local board of education, must be acted upon promptly, and provided to the council with reasons for not approving if such is the board's decision;
- extended the opportunity to apply for state-funded competitive grants and to expend funds on projects thus approved; and
- established that jurisdiction for matters which fall within the scope of the advisory councils and school teams was given to the school teams.

Establishment of District Professional Staff Development Councils

Senate Bill 14, the Omnibus Education Bill of 1988, established one additional vehicle for site-based decisionmaking at the school level. The district professional staff development council was created to enable teachers and administrators to propose staff development programs for instructional personnel. This legislation provided opportunities for increased awareness and skill development in communication areas that can improve site-based decisionmaking. Each district's council must be "composed of proportional representation from the major school levels and from vocational, special education, and other specialties in proportion to their employment numbers in the district" who are nominated and elected by secret ballot of all instructional personnel. The legislators further directed that monies be made available by the local board of education to permit the council to fund its objectives.

Peer control of staff development programs recognized the expertise of the classroom teacher in determining needs for professional growth opportunities. As a result of the increased input by teachers since passage of this provision, staff development in many districts has become increasingly school-based. This has provided increased time for planning and implementing solutions to local school problems and program improvements.

Establishment of School Improvement Councils

The role of school personnel working with parents and community members in site-based decisionmaking was also strengthened through the establishment of school improvement councils included in the 1990 education reform bill. Composition of the school improvement council is similar to the school advisory council created through the 1988 legislation with the exception of an additional school service personnel representative and the provision that, for schools housing grades seven or higher, a student (student body president or other elected by the student body) shall also be a council member. In effect, the school advisory council was replaced by the school improvement council.

No longer was a school council an option of the principal or a 20 percent faction of the school community; the 1990 legislation required its organization. Election of representatives remained the same, but new language assured that school improvement councils would meet at least once every nine weeks and that council chairs would receive assistance from two members in setting meeting agendas. In addition to retaining council eligibility for school of excellence awards and competitive grants, the 1990 education reform bill designated parent/community involvement decisional areas in which the council could expect cooperation from the school in implementing policies and programs it may adopt.

As in authorizing legislation for school advisory councils, school improvement councils may propose alternatives to the operation of the public school. However, if a suggested alternative relates to a waiver of policies or rules of the state or county board of education, state superintendent interpretations, or interpretations of the district or state boards of education affecting employees, then a majority of the locally affected employee group must agree prior to the proposal of the alternative. This language emphasizes the extent of authority the legislature vested in the site-based decisionmaking process with its potential involvement of all education stakeholders.

Establishment of Faculty Senates

Senate Bill 1 of 1990 went further to foster site-based decisionmaking by establishing a faculty senate at each school to be composed of all permanent, fulltime professional educators at the school. All faculty members are voting members and elect the chair, vice chair, and secretary. Each faculty senate must be provided each month a two-hour block of noninstructional time within the school day in which to conduct meetings or to use for other purposes as determined at the local school level.

The legislation recommended that faculty senates have involvement in decisionmaking in several areas. Faculty senates must determine the allocation of the state-provided $150 per professional educator assigned to the school (1990-91 allocation). These funds, designated for the purchase of instructional materials, supplies, or equipment, are furnished by the state in addition to the $50 provided for each teacher's or librarian's discretionary purchase of instructional materials. The faculty senate is also responsible for electing the three faculty representatives to the local school improvement council. The legislation also requires that the faculty senate have an opportunity to make recommendations on the selection of faculty to serve as mentors for beginning teachers under internship programs at the school.

Faculty senates are encouraged in Senate Bill 1 to have involvement in decisionmaking through recommendations to the principal in additional areas. These areas include: assignment scheduling of secretaries, clerks, aides, and paraprofessionals at the school; and establishment of the master curriculum schedule for the ensuing school year. The legislation also is seen as fostering site-based decisionmaking through its recommendation of faculty senate involvement in decisions regarding: nomination of teachers and other school personnel and parents for recognition, the creation of such recognition programs, organization of interviewing processes for professional and paraprofessional educators with recommendations made to the district superintendent, and establishment of a process for review and comment on sabbatical leave requests. The faculty senate is given the authority to solicit, accept, and expend any grants, gifts, bequests, donations, and any other funds made available to the faculty senate, provided a senate member is assigned responsibility for recording all funds received and expended.

Finally, faculty senates may review the teacher evaluation procedure used in their school to ascertain whether such evaluations were conducted in accordance with state code. If a majority of a senate finds that such evaluations were not conducted, the members must submit a report in writing to the state board of education.

1990 Legislation Changes for School Teams and Professional Development

The school teams established by the 1988 Omnibus Education Bill were renamed school curriculum teams in the 1990 Senate Bill 1. This legislation also provided that the teams may apply through the school's local school improvement council for waivers from the textbook adoption process previously established if the team judges that materials necessary for implementation of the curriculum they have developed are not available through the normal adoption process.

Staff development was tied even closer to site-based decisionmaking in the 1990 legislation which identified faculty senates as the nominators of instructional personnel to serve on the district staff development councils. As described above, the district boards of education were directed to make a specified percentage of funds available to the council to enable it to fulfill its objectives, with the local board retaining final approval of such expenditures. One additional source of staff development assistance, the state's Professional Development Center, was established by the 1990 bill and charged with assisting the development and delivery of staff development programs by the district staff development councils and with coordinating staff development efforts statewide. Further, the Legislature, recognizing the importance of training, increased funding to the Regional Education Service Agencies with specification of its use for assisting districts with staff development.

The West Virginia legislation described created increased opportunities for site-based decisionmaking at the school level for educators informed about

and interested in implementing local solutions to school-identified problems/issues. Further training in the processes essential to effective site-based decisionmaking will be necessary to improve the extent and quality of participation and decisions made. With additional assistance and guidelines from the state department of education and state board of education, educators, parents, and community members can begin to become stronger decisionmakers to effect improved instruction and learning for all students.

Case Studies

The case study method is consistent with experiential learning, which holds that learning is more likely to occur if the concepts, principles, or relationships learned are anchored in concrete experience. The case study asks "What happened?" and is descriptive of the processes and structures reported. The purposes of the case studies in this publication are threefold: (1) to illustrate key initiatives being undertaken by schools that are using site-based decisionmaking; (2) to provide contact information for these schools so that other educators may call on them for assistance; and (3) to assess commonalities in effective site-based decisionmaking projects. Study group members, WVEA, and AEL invite you to expand your knowledge about participatory decisionmaking by reading about these programs and then obtaining additional information from the principals and teachers cited.

Bridge Street Junior High School
Site-Based Decisionmaking: A Departmental Model

Program Development and Goals

The site-based decisionmaking model, initiated by the principal, has been utilized at Bridge Street Junior High School for at least 10 years. Goals for the program were developed at the school, according to the school guidance counselor, "because of a far-sighted principal and hard-working staff." Major goals include:

- ownership of a program by staff;
- utilization of department heads to make most decisions relating to their departments; and
- convincing staff that they matter and can change things.

Organizational Structures

A. **Structures.** The department head is the key person in this program. Decisions are made in department meetings where teachers are given information and have input. Department heads meet regularly with the principal and guidance counselor.

B. **Examples of Decisions.** As a result of this model of decisionmaking, a new math course, Algebridge, has been added to the curriculum. This course allows students to progress through algebra at an individual rate rather than in a one-year time frame.

Training/Staff Development and Resources

At the beginning of each monthly faculty meeting, local school staff provide short inservice programs on recent educational research and trends. The county administration supports local site-based decisionmaking, and, according to the counselor respondent, "no one second guesses us very often."

Accomplishments/Obstacles

Although the departmental model of site-based decisionmaking has been used at Bridge Street Junior High for 10 years, it has been changed and improved during that time. The counselor's observation is that "staff members are less likely to 'throw stones' since they are involved in designing programs." The only obstacle he mentioned was that "this decisionmaking model doesn't move as quickly as a principal directive."

Future of the Program

This program will continue to operate within the guidelines of the newly formed faculty senate, according to the counselor respondent. He added, "We wouldn't know how to do it any other way."

Advice to Others

The counselor respondent offered this advice: "The principal, superintendent, and others involved in the program must feel comfortable sharing power and have confidence in the ability of others to make good decisions."

Demographics

Address: Junior Avenue, Wheeling, WV 26003
Telephone: 304/243-0381
Principal: Michael Pockl
District: Ohio County
Grade levels: 7-9
School Enrollment: 400
Number of Faculty: 35

Contact Information

Michael Pockl, Principal
William Childers, Guidance Counselor
Bridge Street Junior High School
Junior Avenue
Wheeling, WV 26003
304/243-0381

Bruceton Elementary School
Site-Based Decisionmaking: Team Approach to Better Schools

Program Development and Goals

The principal and staff at Bruceton Elementary School initiated site-based decisionmaking in 1989 when they were selected to participate in the National Education Association's (NEA) Team Approach to Better Schools (TABS) Program. TABS projects are based on the belief that school reforms are not effective unless they are designed and implemented at the school site. Leadership from the principal and the local WVEA representative was essential to the evolution of Bruceton's TABS project. The principal had become interested in site-based decisionmaking through his reading of the literature in this field and his knowledge of schools in neighboring Virginia that were using this approach to school management.

Goals for the project, developed by school team members with input from the entire staff, are: (1) to develop a stronger parent involvement program, and (2) to provide experiences for students that will develop their basic skills and provide enrichment in their life.

Organizational Structure

A. **Structures**. All TABS committee members are volunteers. Initially, eight teachers and the principal volunteered to participate in the two-year TABS project funded by a grant from NEA. They were given complete autonomy to determine how the grant monies would be used to meet the school's established project goals.

B. **Examples of Decisions**. Team members agreed upon the need for parent programs and hired a parent coordinator from another county to train parents and staff. The school's parent coordinator, a staff member, provided additional training on working in schools to parent and community volunteers. The TABS team developed a handbook incorporating guidelines for school volunteers. The TABS chairperson also organized a regular schedule of in-school assistance for the parent volunteers, who help with tutoring and clerical duties.

To meet the school's second project goal, the TABS committee identified the need for a school library. Since Bruceton does not have a central library or a librarian, the TABS team decided to implement a mobile library. Three carts were purchased, and parents cataloged software and books. Two TABS members developed reading activities for each grade's reading units. Parent tutors select the appropriate unit packets designated by the classroom teacher and use the activities with students.

Training/Staff Development and Resources

Training in decisionmaking skills for TABS team members was provided in a six-hour workshop by a program specialist from NEA. Released time for the team training and for teachers to train parent volunteers was provided by the school system. Team members also researched "what works" in other school systems to help them define Bruceton's mission.

Time and money were the two most important resources identified by team members for accomplishing the school's goals. Grant money from NEA has facilitated the completion of school projects, and $3,000 raised by the Parent Teacher Organization in a walk-a-thon helped supply books and library carts.

Accomplishments/Obstacles

Although the principal cited lack of time and capital as obstacles to the school's site-based decisionmaking project, he added: "I am proud of the fact that staff were willing to give their time to benefit the school. We were able to provide much more for students than is provided by the county administration."

Future of the Program

The principal stated that site-based decisionmak-

ing would continue at Bruceton Elementary School as long as team members are willing to participate. Goals to be implemented during the 1990-91 school year include continuation of the established projects and expansion of the parent involvement program to reach parents who cannot come to the school. Specifically, the team plans to seek funding for an evening homework hotline, a phone-in service to be provided by teacher volunteers four days per week between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. This phone line may be used during the day for parents to receive prerecorded messages or leave messages for their child's teacher.

Advice to Others

"My advice," offered the principal, "is to provide a power base up front for the decisionmaking committee. When people know that their ideas will be taken seriously, and that they have the power to decide, they are more willing to expend their energy."

Demographics

Address: P.O. Box 141, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525
Telephone: 304/379-2593
District: Preston County
Grade levels: K-6
School Enrollment: 317
Number of Faculty: 31

Contact Information

LeJay Graffious, Principal
Billie Broker, Teacher
Bruceton Elementary School
P.O. Box 141
Bruceton Mills, WV 26525
304/379-2593

Greenville Elementary School
Site-Based Decisionmaking: K-4 Curriculum Team

Program Development and Goals

Greenville Elementary School's site-based decisionmaking project was initiated by the principal in 1988 to develop policy and recommend practice for improving school discipline. In response to 1988 West Virginia legislation calling for the implementation of K-4 school curriculum teams, Greenville's K-4 Curriculum Committee has been involved in ongoing K-4 curriculum revision. Information on site-based decisionmaking received from the West Virginia Principals' Academy, encouragement from the county superintendent, and support and cooperation of the school staff have been important components of the program's success.

A series of K-4 faculty meetings, which included special education and Chapter I teachers, was held to establish the project's goals. Teachers responded to a questionnaire designed to elicit comments about a variety of current educational practices as well as local school concerns. Based on teacher responses, the following program goals for grades K-4 were adopted by the K-4 Curriculum Committee:

- Emphasize reading, writing, and oral language skills utilizing the whole language approach, heterogeneous grouping for reading instruction, and reduction of pull-out programs;
- Encourage teacher experimentation with the use of cooperative learning and other nontraditional instructional techniques;
- Emphasize mathematics;
- Emphasize higher order thinking skills; and
- Increase student access to computers.

Organizational Structure

A. **Structures**. The K-4 Curriculum Committee is composed of seven K-4 teachers, one special education teacher, three Chapter I reading and math teachers, one elementary music teacher, and the school principal. Assistance to the committee is provided by the county Chapter I coordinator. For example, a cooperative learning workshop and opportunities for observations of whole language classrooms in other counties were provided at the school's request through Chapter I funding. The committee meets monthly, and all members have input in decisionmaking.

B. **Examples of Decisions**. The committee has made changes in the curriculum to emphasize the math and English programs. Class offerings have been added or deleted based on the committee's evaluation and recommendation. The school schedule has been altered to an eight-period day to incorporate discipline by in-school suspension. Also, the committee has made recommendations for improvements in the school's continuing education program.

Training/Staff Development and Resources

Both the school and central office administration have been supportive of site-based decisionmaking processes at Greenville Elementary. The principal has provided released time for staff development and has encouraged teacher participation in professional development opportunities. The county Chapter I coordinator has made funds available for staff development/training, including a workshop on cooperative learning techniques for all elementary and Chapter I teachers conducted by staff from Johns Hopkins University.

Accomplishments/Obstacles

Greenville Elementary's site-based decisionmaking project is still in the developmental stage and no formal method of evaluation has been established. However, several teachers who have utilized new techniques outlined in the program goals (i.e., whole language instruction, cooperative learning, and heterogeneous grouping) report positive effects on student

and teacher performance. According to the principal, site-based decisionmaking is having a positive effect on all aspects of the school's program. "All the K-4 teachers seem to be buying into the concept, which will increase the likelihood of its success." The only obstacle to site-based decisionmaking cited by both the principal and teacher respondents was a lack of time for teacher committee meetings.

Future of the Program

Greenville Elementary School will continue to work with the site-based decisionmaking model. In 1990-91 the staff began implementation of an in-school suspension program which will be evaluated and improved. Assessment and improvement of the K-4 curriculum will continue.

Advice to Others

The Greenville teacher respondent offered the following advice to implementers of site-based decisionmaking: "If at all possible, all teachers affected by the decisions should be involved in the decisionmaking process and development of school goals. This encourages teacher ownership of the project and, therefore, the likelihood of its success." The principal echoed this advice: "Involve as many teachers as possible in any decisionmaking activity that will have a significant effect on them."

Demographics

Address: Greenville, WV 24945
Telephone: 304/832-6231
District: Monroe County Schools
Grade Levels: K-9
School Enrollment: 300
Number of Faculty: 30

Contact Information

R. Michael Allen, Principal
Greenville Elementary School
P.O. Box 69
Greenville, WV 24945
304/832-6231

Morgantown High School
Site-Based Decisionmaking: A Cooperative Team Effort

Program Development and Goals

Morgantown High School's site-based decisionmaking project began when the school was selected as one of six Professional Development Schools (PDS) by the Benedum Project at West Virginia University (WVU). To become a PDS in this project, the school principal and staff had to commit to shared decisionmaking and improvement of all in the educational community. The goal of the Benedum Project is to create PDS which will become sites of student success and achievement with a clearly articulated emphasis on professional renewal, teaching, and learning.

Although the site-based decisionmaking project at Morgantown High School is still in its developmental stage, the most exciting and complex venture of the initiative is developing and implementing a plan to improve the preparation of students for a rapidly changing future. This will be accomplished through revised curriculum and pedagogy, increased use of technology, and site-based decisionmaking.

Organizational Structure

A. **Structures**. A Steering Committee composed of parents, teachers, WVU personnel, the county superintendent, school board president, members of the business community, and school administrators meets several times each month and directs the project's efforts. Teachers who serve on this committee were selected by the faculty. They, with input from the faculty, selected the additional Steering Committee members from outside the school. Subcommittees, such as a base-line data committee, are formed as needed. In accordance with the mandate of the 1990 Act for Improving the Quality of Education in West Virginia (Senate Bill 1), a faculty senate, composed of all school faculty members, has been established. The faculty senate provides an open forum for teachers to debate concerns and make decisions.

B. **Examples of Decisions**. The Steering Committee members believe that a commitment to combine the best of research with the best of practice will result in improved opportunities for students. To that end, they initiated approximately 20 preschool staff development opportunities. Faculty members will receive training in logical reasoning, critical analysis, problem solving, and thinking skills.

Training/Staff Development and Resources

Funding for released time with substitute teachers, project development, professional growth opportunities, and a halftime substitute teacher for the school project coordinator has been provided by the Benedum PDS Project. Professional development opportunities supported by Benedum funding have included the preschool staff development program initiated by the faculty and the principal's attendance at a national conference on school collaboration. One Morgantown High School teacher, in collaboration with a WVU professor, is conducting research on the use of computers in writing instruction.

Accomplishments/Obstacles

The principal feels the formation of a faculty senate has been beneficial to the decisionmaking process. "I believe," he stated, "that the benefit is creating a team of 85 teachers. Mutual understanding and input from everyone is encouraged. Although it is a slow process, consensus building generates a firmer foundation on which to build."

Time, resistance to change, and redefining roles of teachers and administrators were cited as obstacles to be overcome.

Future of the Program

The Morgantown High School site-based decisionmaking project will continue. In the principal's words, "The staff's belief is that a cooperative team is

more effective than a group of individuals. We believe the benefits far outweigh the problems."

Advice to Others

Following is a summary of the advice offered by the principal and a teacher respondent:

- Provide adequate training in change process for teachers and administrators;
- Clearly define roles of all participants in the decisionmaking process;
- Address all concerns expressed. Deal with individual concerns first;
- Believe in each other. Trust is a must;
- Be open to new and unique solutions to problems. Look for ways of doing things rather than for reasons why they can't be done; and
- Have patience. Habits change slowly.

Demographics

Address: 109 Wilson Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505
Telephone: 304/291-9260
District: Monongalia County
Grade levels: 9-12
School Enrollment: 1,364
Number of Faculty: 85

Contact Information

Thomas Hart, Principal
Jake Seitz, Teacher
109 Wilson Avenue
Morgantown, WV 26505
304/291-9260

Ravenswood High School
Site-Based Decisionmaking: Effective Schools

Program Development and Goals

Ravenswood High School's site-based decisionmaking project was initiated by the principal five years ago. Since the project began staff members have participated in decisionmaking in regard to curriculum development; discipline policies; scheduling; staff development; development of the school's philosophy, goals, and mission statement; setting agendas for faculty and department meetings; and interviewing prospective staff members.

The following school improvement goals, based on data collected from surveys of staff, students, parents, and administrators, were identified by a committee of teachers and administrators:

- Develop an incentive program to assure all students the opportunity for recognition of their accomplishment;
- Create a school climate which promotes citizenship, safety, and respect;
- Demonstrate that discipline is designed and administered in a fair and consistent manner;
- Provide faculty assistance to at-risk students; and
- Implement principles of instruction which facilitate effective use of class time.

Organizational Structure

A. **Structures**. Ravenswood High School utilizes a Coordinating Committee composed of three teachers, recommended by the staff and appointed by the principal, who serve as liaison between administration and faculty. The Coordinating Committee accepts concerns expressed by staff members and presents them, with recommendations, to the administration. Specific problems dealing with instruction, curriculum, or discipline that are addressed in regularly scheduled faculty meetings are frequently solved by a task force of teachers who volunteer to deal with a particular problem. Additionally, each staff member volunteers to serve on one of the committees assigned to implement objectives for each of the five school improvement goals. Teachers also participate in decisionmaking through monthly department meetings, and department heads meet monthly with the administration.

B. **Examples of Decisions**. Teachers help determine how the $65 per pupil allocation is spent. Department heads participate in interviews with prospective staff members and help make decisions on hiring. Scheduling is also done with input from the various departments. The Academic Committee (one of five school improvement committees) recommends new programs such as the language laboratory. Agendas for faculty meetings are determined by the faculty.

Training/Staff Development and Resources

The Jackson County Board of Education and the high school provide funding for staff to attend professional meetings. The central office provides a substitute teacher when training is held during school hours. School faculty and administrators cover classes for teachers who participate in other professional activities. In addition, the Board of Education pays teachers $10.75 per hour when they participate in staff development programs not held during the school day.

Staff elected to use two days of required preschool staff development to develop school improvement goals.

Accomplishments/Obstacles

School improvement goals are reviewed annually and revised in light of changes in state law or Board of Education policy or to reflect recent educational research and innovation. Further review is conducted during the school year in meetings of school committees and departments, the Parent Advisory Council, and the Student Council.

Both the principal and the teacher respondents

agreed that time management is the biggest obstacle to the success of the school's site-based decisionmaking project. With so many people involved, it is often difficult to find a time to meet. However, the teacher added, "Students and staff feel better about being here—more in control of their own lives." The principal stated, "The administration has an 'open door' policy. This creates as atmosphere of friendliness and interest on the part of the staff, which is reflected in the student outlook."

Future of the Program

The Ravenswood High School site-based decisionmaking project will continue, because open communication and teamwork throughout the school have had positive effects on staff and students. Staff members formulate ideas and policies freely, and administrators maintain an open-door policy. According to the principal, "This creates an atmosphere of friendliness and interest on the part of the staff that is reflected in the students' outlook." The teacher respondent added: "Students and staff feel better about being here—more in control of their own lives."

Advice to Others

Both respondents offered advice to others. The principal observed, "Staff involvement in the decisionmaking process will facilitate a noticeable improvement in the school's effectiveness." The teacher respondent listed three recommendations: (1) training for team members, (2) adequate released time for training and decisionmaking activities, and (3) clerical help.

Demographics

Address: Plaza Drive, Ravenswood, WV 26164
Telephone: 304/273-9301
District: Jackson County
Grade levels: 9-12
School Enrollment: 563
Number of Faculty: 38

Contact Information

Fred Aldridge, Principal
Phyllis Fox, Teacher
Ravenswood High School, Plaza Drive
Ravenswood, WV 26164
304/273-9301

Sistersville High School
Site-Based Decisionmaking: School Improvement Plan

Program Development and Goals

The School Improvement Plan, the decisionmaking model for Sistersville High School, has been utilized since 1986. This model is based on Effective Schools research and provides all staff with the opportunity for input into decisions concerning the school's curriculum, budget/resource allocation, and climate.

The goal of the Sistersville High School site-based decisionmaking program is to improve the school in the following areas: budget, curriculum, environment, and assessment. These improvement areas were identified by the principal and staff after a review of state and county Board of Education policies and reports (i.e., Tyler County Plan for Excellence, West Virginia Master Plan for Public Education, North Central Evaluation Team reports); data from needs assessments (i.e., Effective Schools Survey, student opinion survey, graduate opinion survey); and existing school programs (i.e., student programs, student recognition, community development programs). All staff members have the opportunity for input in determining improvement goals and the methods and resources needed to facilitate improvements.

Organizational Structure

A. **Structures**. Sistersville High School's site-based decisionmaking project consists primarily of a structure of teams involving faculty, parents, and students. These include individual department improvement teams and schoolwide membership on correlate teams (one for each identified area of school improvement), the student improvement team, parent advisory council, and the school improvement team. The School Improvement Plan represents a synthesis of input from these various component groups. Each teacher serves on one of the schoolwide teams and on a department team. Membership on schoolwide teams rotates yearly, while department team membership remains stable. The school improvement team meets regularly and as needs arise. Other teams meet at least twice per year: in the spring to write goals for the coming year and at the beginning of the school year to plan implementation of the goals. In the spring, goals from the previous year are reviewed and data from needs assessments are used to revise the school improvement plan.

B. **Examples of Decisions**. Each department team may submit requisitions for instructional resources and equipment for their classrooms. Each team prioritizes its needs and submits them to the principal, who, in turn, prioritizes the requisitions according to the areas of improvement identified in the School Improvement Plan. Funding for the requests comes through the school budget and Step Seven reserves at the school. For example, funding for textbooks and other instructional materials was provided for new classes in the business and math departments to improve curriculum and skill acquisition in those areas.

   The student improvement team, in conjunction with the student council, has revised policies on topics of schoolwide concern such as absenteeism, homework, and academic field trips. Also, the school improvement team initiated a student community service recognition award, and developed criteria and secured school funding for the award.

Training/Staff Development and Resources

The county school system awards staff development credit for teacher participation on school teams. Released time is also granted for teachers to attend conferences that are relevant to the school's improvement goals. Allocations from Step Seven (allocated from the West Virginia Department of Education) funds have increased due to the success of the school's program.

The principal provides staff members with Effective Schools research and information on the school's finances on a regular basis.

Accomplishments/Obstacles

Assessment occurs yearly as improvement goals for previous years are reviewed and data from needs assessments are applied to the development of goals for the next school year.

The teacher respondent offered this observation: "This program has decreased paperwork and increased Step Seven funding." The principal cited major improvements in curriculum, scheduling, and school policies as a result of the site-based decisionmaking project. He also added: "All staff members have an impact on our school climate."

Both the principal and teacher respondents indicated that time was an obstacle to the project. "Released time would be a great asset, but that requires money for substitutes," stated the teacher. Funding was mentioned by the principal as another obstacle. "Improvements need funding. To make this method viable, results of efforts must be seen to lend credibility to effort expended."

Future of the Program

"Sistersville High School will continue its site-based decisionmaking project because it is successful," the teacher respondent explained. The principal agreed, citing this rationale: "School decisions should reflect the concerns, needs, and norms of the organization."

Future plans include the initiation of a Discipline Council composed of students and faculty members. Students will determine the consequences of particular disciplinary problems.

Advice to Others

The teacher respondent offered the following advice: "Be sincere in operating this program. Strive for ways to implement goals, not for excuses to defeat them."

Accordingly, the principal remarked: "Implement the decisions made by the people who actually do the job of education." He added further advice: "Don't make it a time consuming effort. Work harder smarter!"

Demographics

Address: 220 Work Street, Sistersville, WV 26175
Telephone: 304/652-5761
Principal: Charles K. Heinlein
District: Tyler County Schools
Grade levels: 7-12
School Enrollment: 347
Number of Faculty: 31

Contact Information

Charles K. Heinlein, Principal
Rick Pyles, Teacher
Sistersville High School
220 Work Street
Sistersville, WV 26175
304/652-5761

Valley Junior High School
Site-Based Decisionmaking: School/Community Collaboration

Program Development and Goals

Educational trends and legislation have influenced the implementation of site-based decisionmaking at Valley Junior High School. Faculty committees have been involved for several years in decisionmaking regarding staff development and curriculum. However, the school's selection in 1989 as one of six Professional Development Schools (PDS) in West Virginia University's (WVU) Benedum Project formalized the shared decisionmaking process. The goal of the Benedum Project is to create PDS which will become sites of student success and achievement with a clearly articulated emphasis on professional renewal, teaching, and learning. Valley's selection as a PDS site has allowed for professional growth opportunities previously unavailable to the staff which have enhanced site-based decisionmaking.

Valley Junior High School's PDS Steering Committee—composed of teachers, administrators, parents, community volunteers, students, and a representative from the WVU faculty—established the school project goal of implementation of the **Foxfire** concept of curriculum development with emphasis on "hands-on" experiences in each content area. School-level discussions were held in conjunction with the local community heritage project. Consideration for the historical significance of both the school and the community led to the adoption of the **Foxfire** approach. The project's objective is to empower teachers and involve students in the learning process.

Organizational Structures

A. **Structures**. The Steering Committee meets monthly and involves teachers, students, parents, administrators, and community volunteers in the continuous development and implementation of goals. Part of the committee's work is the development of **Foxfire** teaching units that provide "hands-on" learning experiences with emphasis on Appalachian traditions.

B. **Examples of Decisions**. To keep the community informed and involved, the Steering Committee sends monthly newletters that report on committee activities to parents. Also, brochures were designed and an open house was held to familiarize parents and community members with the changes taking place in their school.

Training/Staff Development and Resources

The WVU Benedum Project has been a major resource for Valley's project. The Benedum Project has provided funding for released time with substitute teachers, stipends for teachers who participated in summer work sessions to prepare for the school year, and professional development opportunities for the school staff. WVU Benedum Project personnel visit the school regularly to collaborate with staff and provide assistance with instructional projects. Selection as a PDS site has allowed for professional growth opportunities previously unavailable to the staff. Also, the faculty has developed an understanding of site-based decisionmaking through their experience.

Accomplishments/Obstacles

Although teacher input was encouraged prior to implementation of the PDS project, the level of participation has greatly increased, according to the teacher respondent. "Morale has improved, and the commitment to change has been made."

The principal reiterated this assessment of the decisionmaking process in his comments. "A common philosophy and trust are developing among the various segments of the education community." The greatest obstacle he cited to site-based decisionmaking was "changing traditional thinking about roles of teachers, administrators, and others in the education community to include collaboration, delegation, and student-centered interest."

Both the teacher and the principal agree that site-based decisionmaking has been made easier as a result

of released time and funding provided by the Benedum Project.

Future of the Program

Teachers' enthusiasm for developing creative instructional materials, their empowerment for designing their own classroom destiny, and the improvement in morale signal for the principal that this project will continue. Staff have already made a commitment of time and dedication to the transition from the traditional educational structure to a site-based decisionmaking process. Funding from the Benedum Project will continue to assist Valley Junior High School's site-based decisionmaking project during 1991.

Advice to Others

The school's principal offered this advice to other administrators:

- Believe that a variety of methods can attain similar results;
- Recognize that all ideas have merit, but some are more appropriate than others;
- Realize that delegating responsibility and soliciting input are not threatening; and
- Believe that everyone can contribute, and listen to all contributions.

Demographics

Address: Box 690, Arthurdale, WV 26520
Telephone: 304/864-6507
District: Preston County
Grade levels: 7-8
School Enrollment: 224
Number of Faculty: 17

Contact Information

Dr. Michael Teets, Principal
Rhonda Jenkins, Teacher
Valley Junior High School
P.O. Box 690
Arthurdale, WV 26520
304/864-6507

Wheeling Park High School
Site-Based Decisionmaking:
Management by Committees and Departments

Program Development and Goals

Site-based decisionmaking has been used for eight years at Wheeling Park High School. The project was initiated by the principal after he had conducted research on site-based decisionmaking and received support for the project from the county superintendent.

The following project goals were developed jointly by the district administrative staff and the Wheeling Park High School staff. Both groups utilized state and national data on site-based decisionmaking.

- To provide a positive means for staff to contribute to the school's operation;
- To provide staff with decisionmaking power; and
- To organize a departmental operational system that creates direct teacher decisionmaking in curriculum direction, textbook selection, supply acquisition, and all general departmental operations.

Organizational Structures

A. **Structures**. The site-based decisionmaking project consists of several components. Teachers volunteer to serve on various standing committees, such as discipline, attendance, building and grounds, futures, and teacher/student enhancement. In addition to input from standing committees, the Administrative Council (consisting of a representative from each department and any staff members who choose to attend) meets twice each month. The departmental organization (administration and department heads who meet weekly) "allows for a consistent input/decisionmaking system for all aspects of program direction," states the principal.

During the 1990-91 school year, the staff and administration formulated additional committees to investigate restructuring the school to include ninth grade. These committees include athletics, curriculum, facilities and maintenance, finance, food services, personnel, public relations, staff development, student services, and transportation.

B. **Examples of Decisions**. The Administrative Council created a hall monitoring schedule; developed an examination sequence; and provided recommendations on discipline, club operations, and facility utilization after school. The Future Committee provided recommendations regarding classroom restructuring, facility structural changes, and recycling. The Teacher and Student Enhancement Committee outcomes included encouragement and support for teachers to attend professional meetings, creation of the Student of the Month program, and creation of the Wheeling Scholar Program.

Curriculum expansion that has resulted from the site-based decisionmaking project includes: honors and advanced placement classes, a compensatory education program, a progressive special education program, and a study skills program for at-risk students.

Teachers and department heads participate on all interview committees for open positions at the school.

Training/Staff Development and Resources

Staff development direction is established by teaching personnel, and the programs are planned to meet their needs. For example, county and school level administrators have conducted staff training in decisionmaking and management skills. Also, department chairs are given a released class period for departmental management.

Accomplishments/Obstacles

In addition to the accomplishments already attributed to site-based decisionmaking mentioned in the **Decisions** section of this case study, the respondents added that Wheeling Park High School was selected as a National School of Excellence in 1983-84, its dropout rate is one of the lowest in West Virginia, and 83 percent of the school's graduates continue their education.

The Parent Advisory Council and the School Improvement Council are now working together. Their efforts include achievement recognition programs for students and teachers.

The biggest obstacle in the management system, according to the principal, "was to have teachers accept responsibility for the governance of the programs. After working with site-based decisionmaking and receiving training, the faculty accepted more responsibility."

The teacher respondent indicated that while all recommendations may not have been implemented, "all input into decisionmaking has been recognized, considered, and respected by the administration. All of the Discipline Committee's recommendations were implemented."

Future of the Program

Wheeling Park High School's site-based decisionmaking project is expanding during the 1990-91 school year. Teachers' responsibility for decisionmaking is extending into additional areas, particularly in regard to restructuring the school to include grade nine.

Advice to Others

"Start slowly with well-specified goals and appropriate training, and provide support for all facets of program operation," advised the principal. Further advice was offered by the teacher respondent: "Schedule meetings during school; announce agenda/purpose prior to meetings; and make meeting schedules flexible."

Demographics

Address: Park View Road, Wheeling, WV 26003
Telephone: 304/243-0400
District: Ohio County
Grade levels: 10-12
School Enrollment: 1,480
Number of Faculty: 120

Contact Information

George S. Krelis, Principal
Roberta DeLorenzo, Teacher
Wheeling Park High School
Park View Road
Wheeling, WV 26003
304/243-0400

Recommendations for Site-Based Decisionmaking Implementers

Study group members and AEL staff who conducted this investigation and developed the *WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Casebook* reflected on the data analyzed for the study. They propose the following recommendations for educators and others considering or involved in site-based decisionmaking:

1. Involve all persons affected by a decision in the decisionmaking process.
2. Involve all site-based decisionmaking committee members in the development of goals and objectives for the group.
3. Establish the site-based decisionmaking committee as a high priority among the school's programs and activities. By creating high visibility while empowering members as decisionmakers, more teachers will be willing to invest the time and efforts needed for change.
4. Value the opinions of others and remember that a problem could have many solutions. Communicate often and openly.
5. Believe that site-based decisionmaking can work and look for ways to make change occur rather than reasons why it won't.
6. Support site-based decisionmaking by providing training on released time for all involved.
7. Share leadership and responsibility among members of the site-based decisionmaking group. Be a responsible committee member by voicing support for the group and the decisions made.
8. Plan ahead and use time wisely. Change takes place slowly; realize that patience is essential.

Site-Based Decisionmaking Bibliography

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APPENDICES

MEMORANDUM

TO: WVEA Local Affiliate Presidents

FROM: Kayetta Meadows, WVEA President
WVEA-AEL Study Group Members: Lynn Bennett (Doddridge), Walter Boggs (Wood), Penny Haymond (Upshur), Herb Muncy (Mingo); Jane Hange and Becky Burns, AEL

SUBJECT: WVEA-AEL Study Group Site-based Decisionmaking Project/Program Description Form

DATE: April 16, 1990

The West Virginia Education Association and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory are jointly sponsoring a study group of WVEA members investigating site-based decisionmaking. After reviewing the literature on site-based decisionmaking, recent West Virginia legislation (SB14, SB18, and HB2326), and West Virginia Department of Education policy 126 on establishment of school teams in grades K-4, the group is developing a publication to inform educators of opportunities in the legislation and policies for site-based decisionmaking and of working models of site-based decisionmaking in West Virginia or other states to whom they could look for assistance.

WVEA, AEL, and study group members are requesting your help in identifying models of site-based decisionmaking in West Virginia. The study group is using the following definition to guide its work:

> "Site-based decisionmaking refers to teachers and administrators sharing in planning, problem solving, and decisionmaking on school policies and practices."

Please identify one school in your county that is currently using site-based decisionmaking. Give one copy of the enclosed WVEA-AEL Site-based Decisionmaking Project/Program Description Form, cover letter, and return envelope to an experienced teacher in that school and one copy of each to the principal. If you cannot identify a working model of site-based decisionmaking in your county, please indicate that on the enclosed form and return the form to WVEA. Please provide these materials to both educators by May 4 since the deadline for returning completed forms to WVEA is May 18. Teachers and principals who responded to the WVEA-AEL Survey of Educator Perceptions of Decisionmaking in West Virginia Exemplary Schools are also being invited to complete this program description, and materials will be mailed to these schools directly. A list of these respondents is enclosed.

You will find the following materials enclosed in this mailing: 1) two copies of the WVEA-AEL Site-based Decisionmaking Project/Program Description Form and cover letter, 2) two stamped, WVEA addressed return envelopes, 3) a list of 38 West Virginia exemplary schools that responded to the WVEA-AEL Survey of Educator Perceptions of Decisionmaking in West Virginia Exemplary Schools, and 4) a check-off sheet for you to complete and return to WVEA if you cannot identify a school in your county that is using site-based

decisionmaking, or if the school you would identify is an exemplary school on the enclosed list.

Case studies for schools selected as true site-based decisionmaking examples will be developed from program description responses and follow-up phone interviews (if needed). Contact information will be provided for schools selected as case studies. Each responding school will receive a copy of the final publication. WVEA will make the document available to members, and AEL will announce and publish it at cost for educators in its four-state Region.

If you have any questions about the Site-based Decisionmaking Project/Program Description Form or the study group's work, please contact Jane Hange or Becky Burns at AEL (347-0411, 347-0412, or 800/344-6646).

Thank you for your assistance on this important educational project.

MEMORANDUM

TO: West Virginia Educators

FROM: Kayetta Meadows, WVEA President;
WVEA-AEL Study Group Members: Lynn Bennett (Doddridge), Walter Boggs (Wood), Penny Haymond (Upshur), Herb Muncy (Mingo);
Jane Hange and Becky Burns (AEL)

SUBJECT: WVEA-AEL Study Group Site-Based Decisionmaking Project/Program Description Form

DATE: April 16, 1990

The West Virginia Education Association and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory are jointly sponsoring a study group of WVEA members investigating site-based decisionmaking. After reviewing the literature on site-based decisionmaking, recent West Virginia legislation (Senate Bill 14, Senate Bill 18, and House Bill 2326), and West Virginia Department of Education Policy 126 on the establishment of school teams in grades K-4, the group is developing a publication to inform educators of opportunities in the legislation for site-based decisionmaking and of working models of site-based decisionmaking in West Virginia to whom they could look for assistance.

Because the local WVEA affiliate president has identified your school as one that is currently using site-based decisionmaking, WVEA, AEL, and study group members are requesting your help in describing models of site-based decisionmaking in you school. The study group is using the following definition to guide its work:

> "Site-based decisionmaking refers to teachers and administrators sharing in planning, problem solving, and decisionmaking on school policies and practices."

You are invited to complete an attached WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Project/Program Description Form and return it to WVEA in the enclosed stamped, addressed envelope <u>before May 18, 1990</u>.

Case studies for schools selected as true site-based decisionmaking examples will be developed from responses and follow-up phone interviews (if needed). Contact information will be provided for schools selected as case studies. WVEA will make the document available to members, and AEL will announce and publish it at cost for educators in its four-state Region. Each school responding will receive a copy of the study group's publication.

If you have questions about the Site-Based Decisionmaking Project/Program Description Form or the study group's work, please contact Jane Hange or Becky Burns at AEL (347-0411, 347-0412, or 800/344-6646).

Thank you for your assistance with this important educational project.

WVEA-AEL STUDY GROUP

Site-based Decisionmaking
Project/Program Description Form

Your responses to the following questions will contribute to a publication on site-based decisionmaking projects in schools throughout West Virginia. Responses to questions 8-10 will be summarized with no individual school information identified. Responses to all other questions will be used to develop a one-page description of your project/program with contact information which will be included in the publication. You may attach any documents which will assist in preparing the description.

1. Project/Program Name: _____

   School Name: _____

   Address: _____

   _____

   Phone: _____

   My name: _____
   School Principal, Key Teacher Representative (circle one)

   Phone at which I may be reached during June-July 1990 _____

   I will be available for a phone interview (if needed) during these hours, days, or weeks of this period: _____

2. Program/Project Goals

-over-

3. How were the above goals identified or adopted? Were the goals developed at the school or district level or adopted as part of a state or nationally validated project?

4. How is the project/program organized? For example, who is involved in making decisions? How did they become involved--volunteer, nominated? What length of term does a member serve? How often are meetings held? Does the project/program have task forces or subgroups? What are examples of member and group responsibilities?

5. Was recent West Virginia legislation (SB14, SB18, HB2326) a factor in setting goals or organizing the project/program? If your district is implementing recommendations of this legislation, please describe these activities.

6. Describe any training or staff development provided for project/ program participants.

7. What resources support your site-based decisionmaking program/ project (e.g., additional school personnel, released time for teachers, staff development/training funding sources, administrative support, etc.)?

8. How long has your school utilized site-based decisionmaking? What have been the accomplishments of the project/program? Describe what you're most proud of and/or any impact the project/program has had on the school staff or students. (Responses will be summarized.)

9. What was or is the biggest obstacle to the success of a site-based decisionmaking project? (Responses will be summarized.)

-over-

10. Will the project/program be continued during the 1990-91 school year? Why or why not? (Responses will be summarized.)

11. The publication in which this information will be included will be distributed to educators interested in site-based decisionmaking models. What advice on implementing such a project/program would you offer to others? (Responses will be summarized.)

Thank you for your assistance. Please return this survey to WVEA, 1558 Quarrier Street, Charleston, WV 25311.

Study group members may be contacting you by phone at a later date for further project/program details. Please provide a telephone number where you may be reached during June and July 1990 to help us further describe examples of site-based decisionmaking in West Virginia Schools.

MEMORANDUM

TO: WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Study Group Members

FROM: _____
(name)

_____
(county)

_____ There is no school in my district that I can identify as a working model of site-based decisionmaking.

_____ The best working model of site-based decisionmaking that I can identify is a West Virginia Exemplary School that has already received the Site-based Decisionmaking Project/Program Description Form.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO WVEA IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE BEFORE MAY 18,1990.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Respondents to the WVEA-AEL Survey of Educator Perceptions of Decisionmaking in West Virginia Exemplary Schools

FROM: Kayetta Meadows, WVEA President
WVEA-AEL Study Group Members: Lynn Bennett (Doddridge), Walter Boggs (Wood), Penny Haymond (Upshur), Herb Muncy (Mingo); Jane Hange and Becky Burns, AEL

SUBJECT: WVEA-AEL Study Group Site-based Decisionmaking Project/Program Description Form

DATE: April 16, 1990

The West Virginia Education Association and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory are jointly sponsoring a study group of WVEA members investigating site-based decisionmaking. After reviewing the literature on site-based decisionmaking, recent West Virginia legislation (SB14, SB18, and HB2326), and West Virginia Department of Education policy 126 on establishment of school teams in grades K-4, the group is developing a publication to inform educators of opportunities in the legislation and policies for site-based decisionmaking and of working models of site-based decisionmaking in West Virginia or other states to whom they could look for assistance.

Findings from the WVEA-AEL Survey of Educator Perceptions of Decisionmaking in West Virginia Exemplary Schools, which representatives from your school completed, indicated that the faculties of these schools embraced collaborative decisionmaking strategies. When compared with the results of a national survey of teacher involvement in decisionmaking (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988) and with West Virginia samples from this national survey, the findings indicated that teacher respondents to the WVEA-AEL survey had greater access to decisionmaking than their national and state counterparts seem to enjoy.

WVEA, AEL, and study group members are requesting your help in identifying models of site-based decisionmaking in West Virginia. The study group is using the following definition to guide its work:

> "Site-based decisionmaking refers to teachers and administrators sharing in planning, problem solving, and decisionmaking on school policies and practices."

One teacher and the school principal from each West Virginia Exemplary School that contributed to Factoring in Empowerment: Participatory Decisionmaking in West Virginia Exemplary Schools are each invited to complete an attached WVEA-AEL Site-based Decisionmaking Project/Program Description Form and return each to WVEA in the enclosed stamped, addressed envelopes before May 18, 1990.

Case studies for schools selected as true site-based decisionmaking examples will be developed from program description responses and follow-up

phone interviews (if needed). Contact information will be provided for schools selected as case studies. Each responding school will receive a copy of the final publication. WVEA will make the document available to members, and AEL will announce and publish it at cost for educators in its four-state Region.

If you have any questions about the Site-based Decisionmaking Project/Program Description Form or the study group's work, please contact Jane Hange or Becky Burns at AEL (347-0411, 347-0412, or 800/344-6646).

Thank you for your assistance with this important educational project.

AEL

Improving Education Through Research and Development

July 26, 1990

Mr. Bill Childers
RD 1, Box 180
Tridelphia, WV 26059

Dear Mr. Childers:

The Appalachia Educational Laboratory and the West Virginia Education Association are jointly sponsoring a study group of teachers investigating site-based decisionmaking. The group is developing a publication to inform educators of opportunities in recent WV legislation and WV Department of Education policies for site-based decisionmaking and of working models of site-based decisionmaking in West Virginia or other states to whom they could look for assistance.

Because your school has been identified by Dr. H. Lawrence Jones, superintendent of Ohio County Schools, and Mr. William Luff of RESA VI as one that is currently using site-based decisionmaking; AEL, WVEA, and the study group members are requesting your help in describing site-based decisionmaking in your school. The study group is using the following definition to guide its work:

> "Site-based decisionmaking refers to teachers and administrators sharing in planning, problem solving, and decisionmaking on school policies and practices."

You are invited to complete an attached WVEA-AEL Site-based Decisionmaking Project/Program Description Form and return it to AEL in the enclosed, addressed envelope before August 10, 1990.

Case studies for schools selected as true site-based decisionmaking models will be developed from program description responses and follow-up phone interviews. Information from questions 8-10 (see form) will be aggregated and used anonymously. Contact information will be provided for schools selected as case studies. WVEA will make the document available to members, and AEL will announce and publish it at cost for educators in its four-state Region. Each school responding will receive one copy of the study group's publication due to be completed in early fall, 1990.

If you have questions about the Site-based Decisionmaking Project/Program Form or the study group's work, please contact Jane Hange or me at AEL (800/344-6646).

Thank you for your assistance with this important educational project.

Sincerely,

Rebecca C Burns

Rebecca C. Burns, Training Specialist
Classroom Instruction Program

Appalachia Educational Laboratory • 1031 Quarrier Street • Post Office Box 1348 • Charleston, West Virginia 25325
Telephone 600 624-9120 (outside West Virginia) • 800 344-6646 (in West Virginia) • 347-0400 (in Charleston area)
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SITE-BASED DECISIONMAKING
TELEPHONE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
WVEA-AEL STUDY GROUP

Notes to the Interviewer:

Please review the Project/Program Description Form and request additional information where necessary. Then explain that further information may be necessary to enable the study group to develop case studies of site-based decisionmaking schools in West Virginia and request their assistance in responding to the following questions. Note responses accurately. Use back of page if necessary. Assure respondent that all information will be used anonymously and that responses concerning obstacles and accomplishments will be aggregated in reporting. Each responding school will receive a copy of the final publication.

1. Where did the idea for your school's site-based decisionmaking project originate? Please explain the development.

2. What are some specific examples from the 1989-90 school year of decisions made using a site-based decisionmaking or participatory approach?

3. Can you mail to AEL some samples of agendas or other supportive materials, e.g. team minutes? Provide address (P. O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325). (Needed by 7/31.)

4. What are the future plans for site-based decisionmaking in your school?

Thank you for completing this interview.

Funded by

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Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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Washington, D.C.